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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT OPENS WATER USER ASSOCIATION OFFICE IN KHATLON

DUSHANBE — The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Country Director, Kathleen McDonald participated in a ceremony to officially open the office for the Nahri Kalon Water User Association in Yangiyul Jamoat of Qubodiyon district. The ceremony was attended by local government officials, U.S. Embassy representatives, local citizens, and implementers of the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative. USAID established the Water Users Association through the Family Farming Program. The water users' association will facilitate steady access to irrigation water for over 25,169 residents in this food insecure district.

Farmers in Qubodiyon do not have regular access to irrigation water and many canals and drainage channels have fallen into disrepair. In 2011, USAID initiated the development of the Water Users' Association "Nahri Kalon" through an open and participatory process involving small-scale and commercial farmers, community leaders, and government officials. The Association is now in the process of rehabilitating the region's canals, drains and water control gates.

The USG's Feed the Future initiative and the Family Farming Program's objective is to increase food security and reduce poverty and malnutrition by promoting inclusive agricultural sector growth and improved nutrition -- particularly of young children and women in 12 districts in southwestern Khatlon. To further this goal, USAID helps Tajik farmers to improve irrigation water management practices, which is critical to increasing and improving agricultural production.

Since October 2010, USAID Family Farming Program has established 11 Water Users Associations in Kulob, Vose, Qubodiyon, Shahritus, Nosiri Khusrav, Rumi, Jilikul and Vakhsh districts that will benefit about 26,304 hectares of land and more than 193,000 people.

The USAID Family Farming Program is one of the many assistance projects made possible by the American people through USAID. Since 1992, the American people have provided over \$1 billion in programs and humanitarian aid that support Tajikistan's democratic institutions, health care, education and economic growth.

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